

Don't You (Forget About Me)

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Summary:

"They had promised to stay together, but their hang out sessions at the Barrens after school became more scarce with each passing day. Until eventually, there was no Losers Club left anymore, until they drifted apart.

And then there was Richie Tozier."

1. Bulletproof (I wish I was)

Author's Note:

This is kinda just a disclaimer with some background information in hopes of making this fic a bit more accurate :p

The characterization is mostly built around the portrayal in the movie, although I am halfway through the novel, so you might see some influence of that too!

The story is set in the late 80s - early 90s (movieverse), because I know a bit more about this time period than the 50s (bookverse). For the sake of this fic, let's assume the Losers were about 12 years old when all the horrible shit with IT went down in 1988. Fast forward to 1993. The Losers are now about 17.

If I make any mistakes concerning the time period, or the American high school system for that matter, constructive criticism is more than welcome. Hope you enjoy! And if you do (or do not), pretty pretty pleaseeee leave me a comment, it would make me very happy :D

At the start of high school, they had all promised to stay together. They had experienced something horrible together, and had pulled each other through. They were the Losers Club after all. Inevitably however, after finding out they didn't have all of their classes together, and after some of them made new friends, their hang out sessions at the Barrens after school became more scarce with each passing day. Until eventually, there was no Losers Club left anymore, until they drifted apart.

Mike was the first to gradually stop hanging out with the Losers, not coincidentally after he had found himself a girlfriend and had gotten really into sports. Richie was the second, not finding enough time to

hang with his old friends as well as his new friends. Beverly followed him, craving some female company, and she soon became friends with a pair of girls who didn't call her a slut or bullied her, and who actually enjoyed the same things in life as she did. The fourth one to stop coming to the Barrens was, unexpectedly enough, Eddie himself. He couldn't handle the group falling apart, he couldn't handle them moving on with their life, seeming to forget all the terrible things that had happened to them.

So now, at lunchtime, Eddie Kaspbrak would sit alone at a table, stealing quick glances at his former friends, who sat scattered around the cafeteria. Every now and then he would look at the palm of his hand, and the ugly scar covering it, remembering the promise they had made. It made him angry and scared at the same time. Angry because his friends had left him, scared because, if he ever had to face such evils again, he would apparently have to face it alone. Eddie was never able to get over what had happened that one traumatic summer. It seemed ages ago, but no matter what, he still had horrible nightmares about it and he still had the occasional panic attack. Because of this, he was also never able to make new friends. He felt like he just couldn't be friends with people who thought they had real problems just because of some unrequited crush or some failed test, which isn't exactly on the same level as getting chased down by a murderous clown.

He looked over at Beverly, who had grown her hair out again so it was now resting on her shoulders. Eddie hadn't thought it possible, but she had gotten even more beautiful over the past few years. Probably because now when she smiled, it reached her eyes. A few tables to the left, Bill and Stan were sitting together with a group of people who were all laughing at something Bill had just said, apparently people found him a lot funnier now that his stutter had almost disappeared. Bill and Stan were the only ones who would still sit together every now and then, since they shared many classes. At the table behind them, sat Ben, who had lost a lot of weight over the years, and now it seemed like people actually took the chance to get to know him, which earned him a pretty big group of friends. Mike, when he didn't have football practice, mostly sat with his girlfriend, who was a cheerleader (duh) and some other people from his team.

And then there was Richie Tozier. The Trashmouth. Strangely enough, he had become the most popular out of all of them. It seemed like he was friends with pretty much the whole school. Eddie absolutely hated this. He also hated how Richie had become so ridiculously tall, how his hair fell in messy curls and how he had gotten rid of his glasses. But what he hated most of all, was that his personality hadn't changed one little bit. He still made those awful, inappropriate jokes, still cursed like a sailor, and he still couldn't stop talking even for just a minute. And people loved him for it.

Unable to bear seeing his friends continuing their lives without him, like they just forgot about everything, Eddie had decided to eat his lunch somewhere else from that day forward. The places he would eat his lunch varied from the toilets to the hallways, from the school library (where no one ever sat voluntarily) to the empty stairs in front of the school. He had chosen the stairs that day, which would soon turn out to be a *very* wrong choice, because guess who else had somehow made it into high school? That's right, number 1 asshole Henry Bowers and his goons. Eddie never came to know if it was because he was looking at them in a particular way, or because of him being alone, or just simply because he was sitting there, whatever it was, it earned him a stream of insults and a spectacular punch in the face. And it would've probably earned him a lot more, if a group of students didn't come out at that moment, causing Bowers and his minions to leave to finish the job another time.

Eddie looked at his right hand when a single drop of blood fell onto it, soon followed by another. He wiped at his nose with his sleeve, which came back with a large streak of blood on it. He quickly ran up the stairs, into the school and straight to the toilets, never once looking up. He worked out his rage by slamming the door open, making it hit the wall hard. He was just looking into the mirror to establish how horrible he was looking, when the door to the toilets opened again and - *well, if this isn't fucking fantastic* - Richie Tozier walked in.

Notes for the Chapter:

Song inspo: Bulletproof (I wish I was) - Radiohead

(1995)

"Limb by limb and tooth by tooth
Tearing up inside of me
Every day every hour
I wish that I was bullet proof"

2. Poison

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you so much to all the people who commented, left kudos, bookmarked this story, or just read it!! :D Didn't expect that much feedback since the first chapter was just an introductory one. I decided to already post the second chapter, so you have a better idea of where this story is going! If you have any tips, suggestions or constructive criticism, please don't hesitate to leave me a comment! I'm so desperate for validation :p

Anywaaaays, enjoy!!

Eddie had to keep his mouth from falling open. As they stood there, it was as if time had slowed down, staring at each other for what seemed like hours, Richie standing awkwardly in the doorway, Eddie with blood running from his nose down his lips. Of course Richie would just happen to walk in at this moment, on this horrible day. After all that time, this had to be how they would meet again.

“Wow, what the fuck happened to you?” Richie blurted out, his brow suddenly furrowed in concern, and Eddie realized that this was the first time they had directly spoken to each other in years.

He stared into those familiar eyes, desperately looking for something that would show him that nothing had changed, that this was still the same Richie, still his best friend. Eddie's heart swelled at the thought, making it feel too big for his chest all of a sudden. He felt like he was going to explode. He wanted to throw himself at Richie's feet, tell him how much he missed hanging out with the Losers, tell him how much he missed hanging out with *him*. But instead, he averted his gaze, and when he wasn't looking into the other's eyes, he could feel the feelings of nostalgia ebbing away and intense anger slowly replacing them, because no, Richie did not get to play the hero. Not this time. He didn't just get to waltz right back into Eddie's life, not after ignoring him all this time.

"And suddenly you care because?" Eddie answered, his words coming out even more vile than he had intended to. He was not proud of himself for being this petty, but this was the first time in years that the two of them were alone together in a room, and he was not going to let Richie off easy.

Richie rolled his eyes. "Fine, be that way," he mumbled, but there was a hint of a smile in his voice. He finally got moving and went to get a roll of toilet paper, rolling almost enough paper off of it to make a mummy costume for Halloween. He handed it over to Eddie, who immediately snatched it from his hands and held it up to his nose. "I think you have to pinch your nose," Richie suggested.

"Look, honestly I'm fine, you can go now," Eddie said dismissively, because he didn't want Richie here. He could take care of himself. He didn't *need* Richie here. He wasn't that helpless twelve year old boy anymore.

But before Eddie had a clue of what was happening, Richie was already pinching his nose, with that trademark shit-eating grin on his face. "Stop being so overdramatic."

Eddie wanted to slap him. He wanted to pull at his stupid curly hair and slam his head against the wall. He wanted to bang his fists as hard as possible on his chest. He wanted to wipe that smug grin of his face. But most of all, he wanted to hug him and never let go again.

But instead he jerked away from Richie and pinched his own nose.

"So, tell me what happened?" Richie spoke again, smoothly leaning against the sink, his arms crossed. *What a bastard*, Eddie thought.

Eddie shrugged, quickly getting more irritated by the second. "I guess Bowers got bored and I just happened to be there?"

"Bowers?" Richie exclaimed with a snort. "That guy is still giving you shit?" He raised his eyebrows in disbelief.

That's when Eddie finally lost it. Because yes, Bowers was still giving him shit. Why wasn't he giving anyone else shit? Why wasn't he giving Richie shit? Was it because Eddie was still stuck in that cycle

of being a *fucking* loser, that cycle that all his former friends seemingly had left? Why didn't he get to have this big, magical transformation? Why didn't he get to have any new friends? Why was he still the same Eddie he was years ago, only worse because now he was also sad, traumatized and lonely?

Eddie felt like he could cry, but he would rather die right then and there than start crying in front of Richie. So he simply turned that *pathetic* sadness into anger. Anger seemed to be one of the only emotions keeping him going lately, keeping him from falling apart. Although he had been planning on doing the mature thing and hold it all in, Richie had to ruin it by opening his mouth again.

"Just tell me if you're okay?" he asked, and the pity in his voice made Eddie's stomach turn. "Don't think I haven't noticed that you've been sitting alone mostly during lunch. You never talk to anyone. It's like you're always in your head, Eds, and it worries me."

Snap.

That was the sound of Eddie losing the last bit of self-control he had left in his body.

"Okay, last time I checked, you're not my doctor or my psychiatrist or whatever, and frankly, you're not even my friend. So why don't you mind your own fucking business?" Eddie spat, his eyes pure fire as he glared at Richie and mentally burned him down to the ground. Still, he regretted the words as soon as they had left his mouth. They left a bad aftertaste, as if he had actually spat venom at his former friend. But the nickname. That *damned* nickname did the trick. He gathered every ounce of anger he could muster, put it all into a ball, and used it to storm out of the room, making sure to bump into Richie's shoulder as hard as he could as he passed him.

When Eddie got home, he went straight to his room and plunged down on his bed. He lay flat on his back, staring up at the ceiling, his eyes burning with tears that had been wanting to come out all afternoon. He totally blew it, he ruined his first chance to talk to Richie in years. He was angry alright, and he believed he had the right to be, but he hadn't meant to freak out like that.

He turned his head to look out the window, where he envisioned Richie's face from years ago when he would come almost every evening, knocking on Eddie's window relentlessly, with that stupid, goofy smile on his face. They would spend some time together, talk for hours (quietly of course, so Mrs. K wouldn't hear) and that way Eddie could go to sleep with a calm mind, keeping the nightmares at bay. He would just have to look into Richie's eyes, as he talked and talked and talked, and he would feel like the world could be okay again. But that was back when he couldn't imagine his life without the Losers Club, back when he couldn't imagine his life without Richie.

Eddie finally let his tears fall.

Notes for the Chapter:

Song inspo: Poison - Alice Cooper (1997)

"I wanna love you, but I better not touch
I wanna hold you, but my senses tell me to stop
I wanna kiss you, but I want it too much
I wanna taste you, but your lips are venomous
poison"

3. Forever Young

Summary for the Chapter:

Eeeeeeeek!! Oh my god you guys thanks so much for all the support!! I think I might just be the happiest person alive :p Okay so this chapter, how do you feel about it??

Chapter synopsis:

FLASHBACK CHAPTER. The night before the start of high school. Eddie has a nightmare. Richie runs away from one.

Eddie awoke, standing in complete darkness. He looked around fervently, because his room wasn't normally this dark. Unless he wasn't in his room. Had he been sleepwalking? An unpleasant feeling washed over him. He felt like he was either in a very small space, or an infinite emptiness, whatever it was, it was already starting to hinder his breathing.

He started to walk, sticking his hands out to feel if there were any walls or doors.

That's when he heard it.

"Pssst," a voice whispered, seeming to come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time. "*Eddie, over here.*"

Eddie started to walk faster. He heard the voice again, at first very clear in his right ear, like it was right next to him, then he heard it in his left ear, as if the voice was floating around the room.

"*Eddie, don't be scared. I don't want to hurt you,*" it said, trying to sound reassuring, but each word was coming out more sinister than the one before it.

He threw his head around to look behind him, and then he started walking backwards, until he suddenly bumped into a wall.

"I just want to kill you."

Then the voice started to *snicker*. But the thing is, it didn't stop. It just kept snickering, chuckling, laughing maniacally. The voice kept growing louder and louder.

"Who are you?" Eddie tried to scream over the laughing, but with his breathing getting more impaired by the second, he didn't have control over his voice. He patted the pockets of his pants, desperately looking for his inhaler.

The laughing stopped abruptly. A low, barely audible, growling sound replaced it.

"Looking for this, Eds?" the voice snarled, and out of nowhere, something was thrown against his chest from the darkness. The object fell to the ground, and when he reached to pick it up, he saw it was his inhaler.

This is not real.

This can't be real.

This is a dream.

It's not real.

Suddenly a light flickered on in the distance. It was so bright, Eddie had to blink against it for his eyes to be able to adapt.

When he finally was able to see, he noticed a window, probably at least 30 feet away from him. It was his window, the one from his room at home. It was lit up by the light of the full moon and the curtains were blowing in the cool night air. In a way, the vision calmed him, put him in a trance-like state. But then, slowly but surely, the vision of the window started to move closer to him, floated over to him, until it was just a few feet away from him. The window creaked open, a shrill squeaking sound filling the air.

A face appeared in the window, and Eddie would've fallen down if there wasn't a wall behind him. It was his friend's face, Richie's face,

only it would've been Richie's face, if Richie had been dead and under the ground for at least 2 weeks. His skin had started to turn black in some places, his rotting flesh was peeling off. Cheeks falling in, eyes lying deep in their sockets and there was no sign of his nose. Richie - it - smiled, baring its blackened teeth, some of them broken off, blood mixed with drool dripping from its decaying lips.

"How do you like me now, Eds?" it gurgled with a raspy voice, choking in its own disgusting spit. Its pale and bony fingers grabbed hold off the windowsill. Eddie didn't fail to notice the dirty, overly long and graying fingernails, as Richie, or whatever looked like Richie, hauled himself up and all but crawled inside the room.

Eddie shuddered. His heart started beating so hard it hurt, like it was trying to jump out of his chest. His breath caught in his throat, and he could actually feel it getting stuck, like he was choking on his own damn breath.

The lanky figure just stood there, hunched over, its shoulder drooping off to the left, and when it wasn't standing in the direct moonlight anymore, it looked more like a shadow. Like maybe, it wasn't even there. Like when you're lying in your room at night, and you think you see something in the dark, shadows morphing into figures, figures morphing into monsters, but really it's just a chair with some clothes on it or whatever. Eddie closed his eyes, squeezing them tight, hoping that, when he would open them again, he would see the shadow for what it really was, an innocent piece of furniture.

And so he opened his eyes.

The monster was right in front of him. A twisted smile plastered on its face, its malice filled eyes widened in sinful desire, as it slipped its crooked fingers around Eddie's neck, squeezing so hard its arms started to shake. Eddie tried to slap it, push it away, tried to pry those awful fingers from his neck, but all to no avail. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't *fuckin* breathe. He couldn't -

Eddie jumped upright, bathing in his own sweat. He gasped for air, sucking in as much of it as he could.

He heard a gentle tapping sound against his window, which almost

gave him a heart attack all over again, until he saw Richie's face - his normal face, lit up by the silver moon - scrunched up in concern.

Eddie quickly got out of bed, moving over to open the window for Richie. As soon as Richie had stumbled into the room, he grabbed hold of Eddie's shaking frame. He looked at the beads of sweat on his friend's forehead and the hair clinging to it.

"Breathe, Eds, just breathe," he said softly, rubbing his hands up and down Eddie's arms, trying to reassure him.

Eddie shivered at the nickname, remembering how vile it had sounded coming from the monster in his dream.

"It was just another nightmare, no big deal," Eddie tried to brush off his friend.

"I've been at your window for at least ten minutes, you couldn't hear me. I saw you having that bad dream, tossing and turning, it was horrible. I wanted to help you, but I couldn't -"

Richie was rambling and Eddie didn't know what to say. He looked away and shrugged, hoping his pitbull of a friend would just let this go.

"Do you want to talk about it or no?" Richie then asked, his voice still gentle, his behavior nothing like his normal hyperactive self.

Eddie shook his head. He didn't want to talk about it. He wanted to forget everything about it. And just seeing Richie's face, hearing Richie speak, was enough of a reminder.

"Fine by me, Eddie Spaghetti," Richie then spoke, trying to sound more light-hearted, as he threw his backpack on Eddie's bed. "Don't you worry, old chap, I come bearing comics!" he said cheerfully, using one of his Voices, one he didn't have a name for yet.

They sat there looking at the comics for hours, Richie explaining everything, every reference, every backstory from every character, in detail to Eddie, who was slowly getting annoyed at his friend for constantly trailing off, but he didn't say anything about it, Richie was

so excited talking about it he didn't dare - or want - to interrupt him.

At one point they had moved from a sitting position, to lying down against the headboard of Eddie's bed and his shitload of pillows. Eddie's eyes were growing heavy with sleep.

"Do you want me to go?" Richie asked silently when noticed his friend getting tired.

Eddie shook his head lazily. He grabbed Richie's hand and turned it over to look at the scar covering his palm, just like the one on his own. He traced the scar with his finger, not really knowing why he was doing it. Richie tried to ignore all the things it was making him feel.

"Can you just stay here until I fall asleep?"

Richie frowned at him, a confused smile on his face, internally screaming because *why the hell was Eddie still holding his hand???*

"What do you want me to do?" he asked, while the hand Eddie was holding was already getting clammy.

"Just... Just keep talking, like you always do."

Eddie closed his eyes, waiting and listening before finally letting the sleep take over.

Richie had been talking for about fifteen minutes before he realized Eddie had already fallen asleep. He smiled affectionately, not even a little bit offended that Eddie didn't get to hear the amazing plot twist in the story he had been telling. He stared at his friend, who looked so peaceful now, his chest slowly rising and falling, his breathing calm, all in contrast as to how he had been earlier, during his nightmare. His face was nestled in the nook of his elbow, his expression relaxed.

Richie noticed his hair - Mrs. Kaspbrak kept insisting how Eddie was in dire need of a haircut - which was hanging in front of his eyes, and Richie didn't know why, but he felt a sudden need to brush it away. He lifted his hand to brush away the strand of hair and as he touched

it, he felt a nervousness come over him. He brushed the strand back, but didn't move his hand away from his friend's head immediately. Instead, he let it rest there for a while . And before he knew it, his thumb was clumsily rubbing Eddie's temples. He barely recognized the feeling washing over him, filling him up whole, rising from his stomach to his cheeks. He had felt it before, but never this severely. It was as if a realization hit him right in the face.

It was a good feeling. It was a feeling of love. Just like he had love for Bill, Beverly and the other Losers. But yet, it was a different kind of love, it was more intense. Way more intense. And no matter how awesome it felt, no matter the pure bliss, Richie felt ashamed and disgusted with himself, because he knew he shouldn't be feeling this kind of stuff for his friend. Oh, how the kids at school would laugh if they could see inside his head right now, how they would laugh if they knew his thoughts! Did he really have to give Bowers and his dumb friends one more reason to bully him, come after him? Even the Losers wouldn't want anything to do with him if they knew, Eddie would hate him. He needed to stuff these horrid feelings deep, deep away, until he didn't feel them anymore. And if they didn't go away, he would have to go away, because even losing his friends would be better than them being disgusted with him.

Richie was too lost in his thoughts to notice Eddie furrowing his brows, and slowly blinking open his eyes again. He looked at Richie, who was full on staring at him, his eyes watery and wider than they had ever been. He looked like he had seen a ghost. "You okay, Rich?" Eddie then spoke, his voice laced with sleep.

It was as if someone threw a bucket of cold water right into Richie's face. Whatever he had been thinking or feeling quickly faded away, as he plastered a huge grin on his face. "Of course, Eds. Why wouldn't I be?"

Notes for the Chapter:

Song inspo: Forever Young - Alphaville (1984)

"Let us die young or let us live forever
We don't have the power but we never say never.

Youth's like diamonds in the sun
And diamonds are forever."